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Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development
Third session
25 March-5 April 2002
Item 1 of the provisional agenda*
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Contribution of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme to the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to submit to the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development the text of decision SS.VII/2 of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), entitled "Contribution of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme to the World Summit on Sustainable Development" (see annex).

As requested in the decision, the Commission will also have before it for its attention the policy statement of the UNEP Executive Director (UNEP/GCSS.VII/5) and the report of the Executive Director on the contribution of UNEP to the preparations for the Summit (UNEP/GCSS.VII/3), copies of which will be circulated by the UNEP secretariat.

* A/CONF.199/PC/1.

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Annex

UNEP Governing Council decision SS.VII/2

SS.VII/2. Contribution of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme to the World Summit on Sustainable Development

The Governing Council,

Recalling the Malmö Ministerial Declaration,[1]

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 55/199 of 20 December 2000 on the World Summit on Sustainable Development,[1]

Recalling its decision at its twenty-first session,[1] by which the Council decided that the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum would decide on preparations to be made by it for the World Summit, including its further consideration of the question of international environmental governance in the context of sustainable development,

Noting with satisfaction the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, including the regional preparatory process to which the United Nations Environment Programme provided substantive support,

Having considered the discussion paper[2] presented by the Executive Director,

1. Notes the statement of the President of the Governing Council[3] on the contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme as contained in the appendix to the present decision;

2. Requests the President of the Governing Council to transmit the present decision and its appendix to the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development at its third session to be held in New York from 25 March to 6 April 2002;

3. Requests the Executive Director to transmit his report and policy statement[4] to the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development at its third session as part of contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme;

4. Requests the Executive Director to further contribute to the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to take appropriate action within the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme in the follow-up to the outcome of the Summit and report thereon to the Governing Council at its twenty-second session.

6th meeting
15 February 2002

Appendix

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL: CONTRIBUTION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM TO THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. Ministers and heads of delegation attending the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in Cartagena, Colombia from 13 to 15 February 2002, on

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[1] Governing Council decision 21/21.

[2] UNEP/GCSS.VII/3.

[3] UNEP/GCSS.VII/L.5/Add.1.

[4] UNEP/GCSS.VII/5.

the eve of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, expressed their firm conviction that more than ever before, opportunities for humanity to achieve sustainable development are concrete and real.

2. Since the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, we have witnessed an increase in the number of initiatives and commitments, locally, nationally and internationally, to combat environmental degradation and manage the environment in a sustainable manner. It was widely recognized, however, that there remain alarming discrepancies between commitments and action. While there are encouraging signs, the state of the global environment has been further degraded. Combined with emerging environmental problems rooted in various aspects of economic and social development issues, we face major challenges ahead. The security of Earth is at stake!

3. With the human and material resources at our disposal to achieve sustainable development, there was a call to reiterate the vision of the Malmö Ministerial Declaration stating that: "We can decrease poverty by half by 2015 without degrading the environment, we can ensure environmental security through early warning, we can better integrate environmental considerations in economic policy, we can better coordinate legal instruments and we can realize a vision of a world without slums." The World Summit on Sustainable Development is an important opportunity to move forward in the realization of this common vision.

4. There was general agreement that decisive action should be taken to address the global environmental changes while tackling the root causes of such changes. To address global environmental challenges of the twenty-first century in the context of sustainable development, the fundamental values and goals underscored by the United Nations Millennium Declaration are essential. Poverty, inequality, poor governance and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption should be tackled. Democratic participation in decision-making, particularly the empowerment of women, at the local, regional and national levels provides a firm basis for stability and human security. A holistic policy approach is required to secure sustainable human progress, sustainable natural resources and environmental bases and the survival of all living species on this planet, including human beings.

A. Expectations for the Summit

5. The Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum welcomed the successful outcome of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the positive report by the representative of the Secretary-General for the Summit. On this basis, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was convinced that upcoming meetings will engender a successful Summit delivering tangible outcomes including a political statement, concrete programme of action and a range of specific sectoral agreements, partnerships and actions at the global, regional and national levels. The representative of the Secretary-General for the Summit referred to a global coalition for sustainable development as a possible political framework arising from the Summit. Furthermore, the Environment Minister of the host country of the World Summit informed the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of its preparation for and expectation of the Summit, including possibly a global deal for the implementation of Agenda 21.

6. There was a common understanding amongst ministers that the World Summit on Sustainable Development should be the Summit of implementation, partnership, concrete action and responsible prosperity for all. Ministers noted that success in Johannesburg depends on a properly managed global consensus between Governments and stakeholders, ownership and participation by global leaders of both developed and developing countries, and concrete outputs and deliverables within all three pillars of sustainable development. Agenda 21 is considered to provide viable, internationally agreed policy guidance and strategies for achieving sustainable development. It is time for a renewed political commitment to the further implementation of Agenda 21. We must ensure that environmental protection is fully integrated into social advancement and economic sustainability.

7. Progress with regard to United Nations conventions on climate change, biological diversity and desertification has been achieved. Nevertheless, it was strongly emphasized that every effort should be made to ensure the entry into force of environmental conventions and protocols, if possible by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The important role of UNEP in accelerating ratification processes and in supporting implementation of these agreements was highlighted. The capacity of many countries to

achieve results and fulfill commitments related to these agreements must be addressed by the global community.

8. UNEP must play a central role in the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development by defining and giving content to the programme of action to be agreed on in Johannesburg.

B. Assessment and early warning

9. Following a presentation on emerging environmental trends, ministers underscored the priority they attach to UNEP work in the area of information, monitoring and assessment of the environment and agreed that emerging environmental trends be a standing item of future meeting agendas. Discussions on environmental policy must begin with a statement from the most objective source – the environment itself. It is ultimately the environment that tells us whether our policies and programmes are working, where our successes lie, and where the challenges remain.

10. The third Global Environment Outlook (GEO3) report, to be published in May 2002, will provide authoritative assessment of the state of the environment and its implications for all dimensions of sustainable development. GEO3 is a major input to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. UNEP should strengthen its functions to assess and monitor global environmental changes and provide early warning in support of sustainable development. There was a common view that the scientific basis of decision-making in global environmental issues should be further strengthened. Special consideration should be given to environmental aspects of the needs of the poor and the most vulnerable, in particular children and women.

11. Critical global environmental issues are closely interlinked, and examples of such issues with linkages include climate change, desertification, forests, biological diversity and water issues. The functions of UNEP in enhancing programmatic linkages of global environmental issues should be enhanced.

C. Globalization

12. The Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey will be vital in securing a financial basis for meeting global environmental challenges in the context of sustainable development. A spirit of solidarity is needed for securing funding for developing countries, the least developed amongst them, in order to enable them to achieve sustainable development goals. Strengthened inter-linkages at the national and international levels between trade, finance, development and environment ministers are required in the lead up to Johannesburg and beyond.

13. Globalization should become a positive force for all the people of the world. Economic development in a globalized world can be an instrument for bridging the gap between the poor and the rich. The outcome of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting in Doha is the basis for constructive dialogue at the World Summit on Sustainable Development on trade, development and environment issues. The UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity-building Taskforce on Trade and Environment should continue playing an important role.

14. Many ministers indicated that the World Summit on Sustainable Development should address the structural imbalances in economic power relations between north and south, and promote a platform for better access by developing countries to markets of developed nations, increased investment for developing economies, as well as increased resource commitments from development finance institutions.

D. Poverty

15. The linkages between environment, health and poverty have become ever more real and urgent because it is the poor who suffer most when air and water are polluted. Women and children are particularly vulnerable. Furthermore, droughts, floods and other disasters are wiping out development gains and their frequency and severity is expected to increase with climate change. Urgent action should be taken to preserve environmental services including, for example, energy, water and biological diversity, for the benefit of people by decreasing threats to human needs such as health problems and hunger.

E. Capacity-building

16. Capacity-building should be further promoted. Strengthening the role of UNEP in capacity-building was intensively requested. The role of UNEP in providing advice on environmental policy, law, best practices, technology, and in key areas of institution-building and environmental management was underscored. The GEO process has been highlighted as a useful instrument for developing a network of collaborating centres for assessment and monitoring in countries around the world and has helped to enhance the capacities of participating institutions in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Environmental education for future generations is particularly important and programmes in this regard should be improved.

F. Technology and technology transfer

17. Technological progress and scientific findings must be used for the benefit of all humanity and mankind, bearing in mind the need for precautions. The use of technological progress is linked with the scientific analysis and ethical responsibility of mankind. Clean production, increasing energy efficiency, decreasing wastes and making better use of water, are indispensable. Those should be achieved with environmentally sound and responsible use of technology and technology transfer. UNEP has an important role to play in supporting the development and transfer of environmental technologies. The abilities of young people provide a hope, especially the young people of developing countries. Education and training on these must be intensified.

G. Cultural and biological diversity and ethics of sustainable development

18. It was emphasized that stability in nature is obtained in the diversity of its components and balance among them, bringing the functioning of the ecosystems in total harmony. Diversity in culture, values and civilizations is a source of stability in which we live, with dynamic interaction among them. Diversity of nature is essential for the indigenous people and local communities. The benefits of biological diversity must be shared by the people responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of these valuable resources.

19. It is recognized that the cost of globalization should not be the loss of indigenous cultures and their traditions. Spiritual values, cultural diversity, respect for human rights, and indigenous knowledge can contribute positively to the formulation of a new environmental ethic for the twenty-first century. The keynote speaker and the representatives of civil society presented their views and recommendations to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum that the Summit and the preparatory process for it should address the ethical dimension of sustainable development. Its linkage with unsustainable consumption patterns was underscored. In this context, the promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns remains a key challenge and will be addressed at the Summit. Commitments and actions to enhance implementation are needed. UNEP has a key role to play in this area, especially through its work on cleaner production, sustainable consumption, life-cycle initiative and the Global Reporting Initiative.

20. Young people, enjoying and respecting their differences and identities, in a world of diversity in culture, spiritual values and nature, with democratic decision-making, respect to human rights, will have an important role in giving a human face to globalization.

H. Support to Africa

21. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative is a framework for sustainable development in Africa. NEPAD recognizes the need for sound and effective governance, peace and democracy, macroeconomic stability and a healthy and productive environment as building blocks for sustainable development in Africa. The statement of President Obasanjo of Nigeria delivered to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum by the Nigerian Environment Minister emphasized that NEPAD should receive attention by world leaders at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and should provide a basis for UNEP's future work in the African region. In addressing Africa, the importance of regional and subregional dimensions was highlighted for the World Summit and its outcome.

I. Health and environment agenda

22. The interlinkages between health and environment are growing in prominence and warrant discussion in Johannesburg. The degradation and depletion of water, air, land, marine and biological resources all have profound impacts on human health, as is possible with changes in the atmosphere and climate and the unsafe use and management of chemicals. Health and environment can provide a useful focus for international action, particularly at the regional level. UNEP will continue to work with other partners such as the World Health Organization to support these efforts to ensure that the appropriate linkage between human health and environmental protection is made.

23. Freshwater resources are vitally important to sustaining peoples' lives and welfare, and enabling them to work for economic and social development. Water is critical also for sustaining the environment, which could in turn provide people with sufficient sustainable resources as a basis for economic and social development. Support was expressed for UNEP to develop a plan of action for providing technical and legal assistance for the better use of water resources. Water - both freshwater and the marine water- should be addressed in a more holistic manner as called for in the UNEP Water Policy. Urgent action should be taken to implement the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities in light of the Montreal Declaration.

24. Chemicals and wastes have a serious impact on health and the environment. Ratification and entry into force of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is a priority. Further work of UNEP in the chemicals agenda, as decided at the present session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, was welcomed.

25. In discussions, many referred to rapid urbanization and the challenge it presents with regard to sustainability of vital and sensitive ecosystems especially small island developing States, the Arctic, mountain regions, coastal zone and oceans.

J. Sustainable energy

26. In its endeavour to address the reality that more than 2 billion people lack the energy they need to heat and light homes and pump water, the World Summit on Sustainable Development must take up the issue of access to energy and use of renewable energy and energy efficiency. In this regard, UNEP has much to share and is eager to be a partner in sustainable energy outcomes that emerge from Johannesburg. Energy and energy efficiency should be addressed from all dimensions of sustainable development. This is the issue both for urban and rural areas. Renewable energy as an essential element of economic development must be affordable. UNEP is active in providing capacity-building in this field through its network of Sustainable Energy Networks.

K. Governance

27. Improved environmental governance is essential for providing efficient and effective patterns of implementation of sustainable development from environmental perspectives. Ministers successfully concluded work on international environmental governance at the present session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the results will be transmitted to the third Preparatory Committee meeting for the Johannesburg Summit. Ministers underlined the urgent need for strengthened international environmental governance in the context of sustainable development governance. UNEP must be at the centre of the international environmental architecture as emphasized in the Malmö Ministerial Declaration.

28. Effective governance, including environmental governance, at all levels will provide the Government and people of each country with a solid basis for their economic and social development and prosperity.

L. Implementation

29. Implementation of the existing national and international laws are a matter of priority. Implementation of multilateral environmental agreements should be further enhanced, with appropriate assistance given to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The UNEP Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law for the First Decade of the Twenty-first Century (Montevideo Programme III) should be fully implemented for addressing legal and institutional means for

achieving the environmental dimension of sustainable development. Institutional arrangements to strengthen collaboration between UNEP and other relevant entities, including multilateral environmental agreement entities competent in fields other than the environment should be pursued.

30. The financial basis for sustainable development should be secured and shared by all concerned. Foreign direct investment, debt relief, official development assistance - all need to be addressed. Ministers underscored the need to reconfirm all principles of the Rio Declaration including principle 7 regarding common but differentiated responsibilities.

31. The importance of regionally based approaches was emphasized. The UNEP regional offices and partnerships to promote and foster the global environmental agenda in the regions, including the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and sustainable development policy and programmes, should be strengthened.

M. Partnerships with civil society and the private sector

32. Ministers benefited from the direct inputs they received from civil society representatives in their deliberations. It was acknowledged that there are limits to how far we can advance our efforts without truly engaging civil society, particularly the private sector, yet there is no limit to our potential if we have civil society at our side as an active and enthusiastic partner. Partnership with civil society organizations and the private sector must be a key element in Johannesburg. The private sector should be further encouraged to strengthen its initiatives for undertaking environmental responsibilities, for example through the Global Compact, the Global Reporting Initiative and voluntary initiatives.

33. Finally, in the Post-Cartagena process, ministers agreed that concrete action programmes incorporating specific time frames need to be established in the work of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and UNEP.